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Director's Notes for *Miss Julie*

August Strindberg lets his misogynistic feelings be known in his play *Miss Julie*. Born into an unhappy family and later enduring an unhappy marriage, it is this background that helped shape his attitude towards women. He repeatedly uses Julie as a character to defend his view that women are coarse and weak. Julie however is not evil nor good, but a tragic product of her parents' role-reversed marriage. Julie is quite simply naive and immature, two qualities that allow her to get caught up in the "night's activities."

The play takes place on Midsummer Eve, the most important holiday in Sweden where it is believed that on this night magic and energy are at their height. Because of these elements, along with the fact that Miss Julie is risky because of her recent broken engagement, Strindberg is able to use the holiday as motivation for Julie and Jean's affair. With the Count also gone, Julie's downward spiral is inevitable.

*Miss Julie* was a shock for its time quite simply because it was one of the first plays to discuss the act of "sex" without love. Its sadomasochistic undertones were no mistake, for Strindberg was convinced that "we as humankind are dark by nature." He uses his "theory" to explain why Miss Julie enjoys "whipping her husband," causing him to break their engagement, as well as Jean, the valet, who enjoys "ruining" Julie in addition to the rush of power he experiences from knowing that he is responsible for her "fall." In turn, however, Julie is masochistic as well, enjoying the process of her own downfall. The two throughout the night share each other's passion about escaping their class as well as sexual desires that were way too taboo for the time. Eventually Jean discovers that he has a way out which is none too pleasing to Miss Julie.

Bryan Edward Avis

*Miss Julie* by August Strindberg

Director: Bryan Edward Avis

Light Design: Eric SenneSet

Design: Bryan Avis & Jessica Kuehnau

Cast: Katelyn Pearce

Patrick Meraz

Kara Ewinger

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